

# Transcript of the Testimony of

**Date:** January 9, 2018

**Case:** PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION OF OGDEN  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF CHICAGO AND EDWARD  
JENNER ELEMENTARY ACADEMY OF ARTS

**TOOMEY REPORTING**

312-853-0648

**January 9, 2018**

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IN RE: PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION OF OGDEN INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL OF CHICAGO AND EDWARD JENNER ELEMENTARY  
ACADEMY OF ARTS

JANUARY 9, 2018

7:03 p.m.

The proceedings had in the  
above-referenced matter taken before Marianne

1 Nee, a Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State  
2  
3 of Illinois, CSR License No. 084-002341, taken  
4  
5 at 24 West Walton Street, Chicago, Illinois, on  
6  
7 Tuesday, January 9, 2018, commencing at 7:03  
8  
9 p.m.

1  
2 APPEARING ON BEHALF OF CPS:  
3

4 MS. CHERYL NEVINS, Presenter

5 MR. BRIAN METCALF, Facilitator

6 MS. NATASHA PATTERSON, Deputy Chief of  
7 Schools

8 MS. SARAH BRIGGS, ODLSS

9 MS. ETHEL BARKER, STLS

10 MR. ERNEST ILARDE, Talent

11 MS. LAURIE DEAN, Office of Social and  
12 Emotional Learning  
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P R O C E E D I N G S:

\* \* \*

MR. METCALF: Good evening. We would like to officially start. Before we start, does anyone have need of assistance of sign interpretation?

So they're going to sit in the back if people come in and need this additional service and/or if someone needs assistance in Espanol.

First I'd like to welcome everyone here tonight. I would like to thank you for coming to speak with us today. But before we get started, I'd like to thank and welcome Alderman Walter Burnett from the 27th Ward who took time out of his busy schedule to come in and be a part and will be speaking shortly. Additionally --

(Applause.)

MR. METCALF: Additionally, Dr. Michael Beyer, the principal at Ogden. Can we give him a round of applause?

(Applause.)

MR. METCALF: And the other principal

1 of Ogden, Cara Kranz.

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. METCALF: And Dr. Shelton -- can  
4 you come up, please -- who is the principal of  
5 Jenner.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. METCALF: So this meeting is a part  
8 of the proposed Ogden and Jenner consolidation  
9 which was formally proposed on December 1, 2017,  
10 following months of community engagement leading  
11 up to the announcement. My name is Brian  
12 Metcalf and I am the network chief for Network 6  
13 for Chicago Public Schools.

14 I am also here with Cheryl Nevins from  
15 demographics, Natasha Patterson, deputy chief of  
16 schools. We are here today on behalf of our  
17 interim CEO Dr. Janice Jackson to share some  
18 basic information and hear from you, the most  
19 important part, about the specific proposal.

20 So while we won't be able to take any  
21 formal questions during the presentation, we do  
22 want you to know that there are folks from  
23 Central Office that are here that will be able  
24 to answer any questions for you 30 minutes after

1 the open session concludes. So those folks are  
2 ODLSS Sarah Briggs, STLS Ethel Barker, and from  
3 Talent Ernest Ilarde, and from the Office of  
4 Social and Emotional Learning Laurie Dean.

5 As I mentioned a moment ago, the  
6 purpose of this meeting is to allow CEO Jackson  
7 and the Board to hear feedback from you about  
8 the specific proposal under discussion. I will  
9 start by running through a brief introduction  
10 and logistics. Then you'll hear from Cheryl  
11 Nevins who will run through a brief presentation  
12 providing information related to the proposed  
13 action.

14 After this we will allow the remaining  
15 time for public comment. Our goal is to make  
16 sure that this meeting ends promptly at 8:00  
17 p.m.

18 If you did not have a chance to comment  
19 or do not wish to comment at this meeting, you  
20 do have the opportunity of emailing  
21 transitions@cps.edu. You can also submit  
22 written comments at the registration table. A  
23 staff member at the desk will provide more cards  
24 for written comments if you have not yet

1 received one. So if you would like a note card  
2 to write your comments down in the event that  
3 you did not sign up to speak publicly, a member  
4 of the team can help and assist you if you need  
5 a note card.

6 For additional information, please  
7 reference the plan regarding the school action  
8 at cps.edu/transitions.

9 In addition, meeting notes from each  
10 individual meeting will be available online at  
11 cps.edu/transitions within five days of this  
12 meeting.

13 At this moment I'm going to introduce  
14 Cheryl Nevins who will go over the overview for  
15 the legal process.

16 MS. NEVINS: Thank you, Brian.  
17 Welcome, everyone.

18 First of all, I'd like to just note  
19 that Dr. Jackson wanted to make it a priority  
20 that any parents that are here now that are part  
21 of this action, we have the first two rows  
22 reserved for you. So if anyone would like to  
23 move up, please feel free so that you can hear  
24 and see at any point in time.



1           So this meeting tonight is obviously a  
2 part of a larger picture and a broader timeline  
3 regarding this proposal. So on October 1st CPS  
4 published draft guidelines for school actions,  
5 and on December 1st we sent notice of those --  
6 of the proposed actions as well as draft  
7 transition plans. And now we're here in January  
8 where there will be two community hearings that  
9 will occur, the first of which is tonight, the  
10 second one which is one week from tonight at  
11 Jenner, and there will be a hearing at the Board  
12 as well for the third opportunity.

13           The earliest that the Board can vote on  
14 this proposed action is in February. So after  
15 the three opportunities for community input, the  
16 CPS -- CPS will make a recommendation on behalf  
17 of the CEO to the Board regarding whether or not  
18 the Board should vote on this proposal.

19           We're here after a long process. As  
20 many of you know already, so many activities  
21 have gone on and occurred. We have a steering  
22 committee formed and that steering committee is  
23 made up of faith leaders, Reverend Leahy and  
24 Rabbi Limmer. We have a Jenner and Ogden

1 teacher on that, as well as members of the  
2 Jenner and Ogden community.

3 We have also held three well-attended  
4 community meetings, one back in February, one  
5 back in March, and one back in April of 2017,  
6 and we've also seen this past year many of the  
7 activities have gone on with Jenner and Ogden  
8 students learning together through their JOLT  
9 activities as well as a single story through the  
10 SEED program that has worked with the staff at  
11 Jenner and Ogden.

12 Through this process and through this  
13 community engagement some of the things that we  
14 have heard from all of you, the desire to keep  
15 the International Baccalaureate program while  
16 providing robust supports for the students, a  
17 desire to maintain Jenner's strong culture  
18 including the N.E.S.T. philosophy.

19 Some of the other issues that we have  
20 heard are transportation, so there will be  
21 transportation provided between Jenner and  
22 Ogden, as well as the current activities and  
23 events to continue to bring the two communities  
24 together, Grades K to 4 at Ogden East as well as

1     Grades 5 to 8 at Jenner.

2             There was also an idea and a notion to  
3     make sure that Jenner's current 8th graders  
4     would have a seat at Ogden High School if they  
5     so chose to attend.

6             We have also heard about the pre-K  
7     program. It's a necessity for Jenner families,  
8     and we're hoping through community engagement we  
9     will hear more activities and ideas from all of  
10    you tonight.

11            So with respect to the proposed changes  
12    that would occur this fall, Ogden International  
13    would have three buildings. We would be  
14    expanding Ogden's boundary to include the  
15    current Jenner boundary. With respect to the  
16    high school, that would still remain at the  
17    Ogden West campus and it will serve Grades 9  
18    through 12. Once again, Jenner 8th graders this  
19    current year would be allowed to attend Ogden  
20    West if they chose.

21            These are the locations of the three  
22    campuses: 24 West Walton would be for K through  
23    4, 1119 North Cleveland, the Jenner building,  
24    would be Grades 5 to 8, as well as 9 through 12

1 at the Ogden West campus at 1250 West Erie  
2 Street.

3 Some of the details of the proposal --  
4 and again you can find more details in the  
5 actual transition plan that some of you may have  
6 received on December 1st. If not, it's online  
7 at the website cps.edu\transitions.

8 Some of the exciting details are that  
9 CPS has budgeted approximately 1.8 million over  
10 the next three and a half years to support the  
11 transition of these students.

12 In addition, we have already committed  
13 to some staffing supports which would be, but  
14 are not limited to, an assistant principal at  
15 each of the schools, a school counselor and a  
16 school clerk at each of the three buildings, a  
17 principal and a school-based transition  
18 coordinator to assist with the transition. The  
19 school-based transition coordinator is the  
20 person for parents and students to make the  
21 transition as seamless as possible. We would  
22 also this semester train Jenner teachers in the  
23 IB curriculum.

24 There is school climate supports for

1 the creation of a Culture and Climate team  
2 implementing the Responsive Classroom and SELF  
3 program as well as committing to a restorative  
4 practice coach from Central Office for at least  
5 once a week.

6 These are some of the social and  
7 emotional supports to support students during  
8 this transition process. Some of the logistic  
9 supports, as you can see, transportation will be  
10 provided between Jenner and Ogden East. We will  
11 continue to discuss staggered start times so  
12 that parents that have students at multiple  
13 campuses, that it eases the burden on them.

14 We will review the need for additional  
15 Safe Passage Program or any other implements  
16 from CT Security, and ODLSS will work with  
17 individual families, and that representative is  
18 here tonight to help guide individual families  
19 through this process.

20 And that's it. That's some of the  
21 details on the transition plan. Again, you can  
22 read the plan in detail, which is a draft at  
23 this time, on the CPS website.

24 I will turn it back over to Brian.

1 MR. METCALF: Thanks, Cheryl. Before  
2 we go into the public comment and public  
3 feedback, if members of the student committee  
4 can just raise your hand for us, this group of  
5 people were really intentional about working  
6 over the last few years. Can we give them a  
7 round of applause?

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. METCALF: This group has been one  
10 of the highlights of my transition into this  
11 role. They are some of the most thoughtful  
12 transitions people that I have met, and they  
13 really wanted to make sure that at the district  
14 level all of these supports that you see here in  
15 this limited transition plan work, so I just  
16 wanted to acknowledge them for their hard work,  
17 the long hours, the many days and the incredible  
18 amazing work that they've done.

19 Now for public comment. Alderman, are  
20 you -- okay.

21 So we will have some ground rules for  
22 public comment as we proceed to this section.  
23 During public participation each speaker that  
24 signed up will have two minutes to share their

1 thoughts. You will get a one-minute warning  
2 mark and then a 30-second warning mark, and then  
3 you will have allotted all of your time.

4 Speakers will be asked that you make  
5 sure that you come to the side and a member of  
6 the transition team will help you and organize  
7 you by number. And here is what we're asking.

8 We are asking that we allow those  
9 speakers to be heard because we have someone  
10 that is taking notes for us and we want to be  
11 able to capture what everyone is saying.

12 Again, the meeting is scheduled to end  
13 at 8:00 p.m. The comment period will last until  
14 the scheduled end time of the meeting, and so if  
15 there are any remaining people that would like  
16 to sign up to engage in the public comments  
17 section, you still have time to go sign up at  
18 the table, the registration table in the back.

19 If time remains and we conclude the  
20 public comments section early, those parents or  
21 community members who did not initially sign up,  
22 you can continue to sign up in the back at the  
23 registration table to get an opportunity to  
24 speak and, likewise, if you spoke and were not

1 able to finish what you had to say in the first  
2 two minutes, you can sign up again and come up  
3 again.

4 Remember, we're asking, so that  
5 everybody is heard, that we stick to the  
6 two-minute time. All right. So let's begin.

7 Can I have speakers 1 through 5 line up  
8 at the microphone here, speakers 1 through 5.  
9 And for each, before we begin, can you make sure  
10 that you state your name and your affiliation  
11 with either school before you start. Again, for  
12 all speakers make sure that you state and spell  
13 your name and your affiliation with either Ogden  
14 or Jenner.

15 MR. BLAKEY: Good evening. My name is  
16 Randall Blakey. I serve as the pastor of  
17 LaSalle Street Church and executive director of  
18 the Near North Unity Program.

19 The Near North Unity Program exists to  
20 protect the community residents and stakeholders  
21 of the community, enhances and improves the  
22 quality of life for all, "all" being the  
23 operative word.

24 About three years ago there was an idea



1 that was brought to the Near North Unity Program  
2 by the chair of our Youth and Families  
3 Committee. The Near North Unity Program works  
4 in four different areas; youth and family,  
5 safety, employment, and language and  
6 development.

7 About three years ago there was an idea  
8 that was brought to our attention when we  
9 learned that Jenner was under-enrolled and that  
10 Ogden was over-enrolled. That idea was a  
11 possible merger of the two so that one wouldn't  
12 have to close and so forth and so on.

13 Another thing that came out of the  
14 Youth and Family Committee is a quality of life  
15 plan, a community quality of life plan that  
16 calls for an equitable education throughout this  
17 entire community. We see this opportunity as  
18 one of the ways to achieve equitable education  
19 in this community but also to bring about  
20 cross-cultural learning.

21 There was a judge, Thurgood, Marshall  
22 that said, Unless our children learn how to --  
23 unless our children have an opportunity to learn  
24 together, they will never be able to live

1 together. So we have always been strong  
2 proponents of children being able to learn from  
3 each other and particularly when they are  
4 different from each other.

5 The last thing that I would say is that  
6 over these last three years one of the things  
7 that has been our foundation is having the right  
8 attitude and the right approach to this  
9 particular endeavor. We believe that the right  
10 attitude gives you the fortitude to overcome all  
11 obstacles. We are not saying at all that we  
12 have had not had disagreements, that we have not  
13 all been on the same page.

14 But one of the things that we have  
15 approached this opportunity with is the right  
16 attitude, and that right attitude has seen us  
17 through those three years and seen us here  
18 tonight.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. CONLEY: I would like to echo  
21 Reverend Blakey's comments. Wonderful. Thank  
22 you.

23 I'm Chris Conley. My daughter is in  
24 5th grade at Ogden. I just wanted to share my

1 excitement and support for the merger of Jenner  
2 and Ogden communities. It's an elegant solution  
3 to the challenges facing both of our schools and  
4 it creates new opportunities for all of the  
5 students.

6 The Jenner and Ogden Community Steering  
7 Committee has been tireless in their gathering  
8 input, addressing concerns and moving the  
9 proposal along with rigor and transparency. I'd  
10 like to acknowledge all of their hard work as  
11 was done before and thank them for it.

12 The resulting CPS plan addresses the  
13 concerns that have been voiced by each of the  
14 two stakeholder groups throughout the process.  
15 I want to thank CPS for proposing this  
16 transition with a strong plan that will support  
17 the students, the teachers, and the community in  
18 making it a success.

19 I look forward personally to supporting  
20 the transition and getting a little more  
21 exercise when I walk my daughter to school next  
22 year. Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. TAYLOR: We can ask for the

1 speakers all the way up to number 20.

2 MR. METCALF: Can we stop at seven? So  
3 we'll go two through seven in increments of five  
4 so people don't have to stand. All right. So  
5 who is next?

6 MS. TAYLOR: No. 8.

7 MR. METCALF: 8. That's fine.

8 MS. LAND: Good evening, everyone. My  
9 name is Debora Land and I am speaking tonight as  
10 a parent of an Ogden 6th grader, as a parent  
11 volunteer at the west campus school where I've  
12 logged over 100 volunteer hours already this  
13 school year, so I spend a lot of time on campus.  
14 And I speak also as a property owner in the  
15 Ogden property tax bracket. I am here to  
16 support the proposed action to merge Jenner  
17 Academy into Ogden International.

18 My husband and I grew up in and  
19 completed our public school educations in  
20 various homogenous communities, me here in a  
21 Chicago suburb and my husband in a small village  
22 in Germany. During our professional experiences  
23 once we finished school, we had to learn how to  
24 navigate successfully in a diverse work world

1 with colleagues, suppliers and customers whose  
2 cultural and family histories were not like our  
3 own.

4 In today's more complex world, our  
5 children will need these skills even more than  
6 we did, judging the people they come in contact  
7 with based on their abilities and contributions  
8 and not culture or family history. They need to  
9 learn this starting at school and not wait until  
10 they are out in the world like we did.

11 Ogden International's mission is to  
12 create global citizens. As a parent volunteer,  
13 I see that our administration has set the tone  
14 for fulfilling this mission and students of our  
15 middle school and high school have embraced this  
16 as part of a daily culture.

17 Come watch our students at lunch. They  
18 are always mixed. This is not a segregated  
19 school. This is a mixed school. I have  
20 pictures to prove it. Check the Ogden blog.  
21 It's on there from last Friday.

22 The ability to function as an integral  
23 part of a diverse team is equally as important  
24 as academics. I am certain that all of our

1 students, both from Ogden and from Jenner, will  
2 benefit from the merger of our two schools. In  
3 the merged school they can experience the  
4 academic learning and social learning that will  
5 be a foundation for their professional life when  
6 their education is completed.

7 The merged school will also make much  
8 more efficient use of the infrastructure of the  
9 three school buildings involved. Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. DRECYNSKI: Good evening,  
12 everyone. My name is Michele Dreczynski.

13 My family and I live within the current  
14 Jenner school attendance border area. I'm the  
15 proud mom of a CPS student, and I have the  
16 pleasure of serving as the youth and  
17 family chairperson at the Near North Unity  
18 Program.

19 Tonight I once again ask CPS and the  
20 Board of Ed to support and vote for the planned  
21 Jenner-Ogden merger proposal. The Jenner-Ogden  
22 merger plan solves serious facility utilization  
23 issues at both Jenner and Ogden schools.

24 Campus sharing also wisely maximizes

1 the use of scarce CPS financial resources, but  
2 most of all the merger plan expands and supports  
3 additional student access to high quality IB  
4 education for the entire Near North side, all of  
5 this while quietly blending two schools' culture  
6 and children into an amazing new type of  
7 integrated neighborhood school, the type of  
8 school Chicago so desperately needs.

9 The benefits of this type of school  
10 merger have been well established and documented  
11 throughout the CPS process that we've just  
12 engaged in, a community engagement process that  
13 currently has been formed and worked with the  
14 Jenner Ogden Steering Committee and partnered  
15 with by CPS, a community engagement process that  
16 might seem new to some of you but a process that  
17 actually dates back at least to 2013 when the  
18 then CPS network chief Linda Williams in her  
19 public testimony recognized the importance of  
20 programs like IB for student success at Jenner.

21 There has never been more work done to  
22 prepare for a CPS school consolidation than the  
23 work that has been done here. I believe this  
24 important prep work done by the community and

1 CPS will set the stage for the most productive  
2 and successful school merger our district has  
3 ever seen.

4 Therefore, given the planning and  
5 process that has taken place, I ask the Board of  
6 Ed and CPS to please support and vote for the  
7 proposed school action to merge. Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. GONZALEZ: Hello. My name is  
10 Dharma Seda Gonzalez, and I'm a senior at Walter  
11 Payton.

12 In 1964, right after the historic Brown  
13 v. Board decision, Malcolm X said that America  
14 preaches integration yet practices segregation.

15 I also learned one thing, that it takes  
16 all of us to make real change. In a world  
17 threatened by war, in a country full of hate,  
18 and in a city plagued by de facto segregation,  
19 this merger is a beacon of light for race  
20 relations in Chicago, and it's proof that a  
21 single unprecedented dream can become a reality.

22 Three years ago Michele Dreczynski had  
23 a dream that a predominantly black school in  
24 Cabrini-Green could merge. She had a dream that



1 our diverse Near North community could work  
2 together to fight for educational equity. To  
3 Michele, thank you for all your dreams.

4 We are here today because of her idea,  
5 1,269 petition signatures in support of CPS and  
6 everyone in this room who cares enough about  
7 Chicago's children to take a stance on an issue  
8 greater than ourselves.

9 Activity for this merger has filled me  
10 with a sense of inspiration, passion, and  
11 urgency to act that I have never experienced  
12 before, and for that I'm very grateful. I can't  
13 wait to see what we can accomplish together.  
14 Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. CASTRO: Hello. My name is David  
17 Castro, and I'm not going to be able to follow  
18 that up quite as well. So again my name  
19 is David Castro with CPS.

20 Last year was my first year at Ogden  
21 and I primarily worked with students at Ogden  
22 West. In my time there I was able to really  
23 appreciate the academic rigor that Ogden is  
24 known for in their model, but more so the

1 cohesive network that's created with teachers  
2 and parents that are actively participating in  
3 the students' education process. It's honestly  
4 been something that has transpired a little more  
5 openly than I had spent my entire life at CPS to  
6 see these models.

7           It's really going to shape a little  
8 more of the romantic notion for me and  
9 education. This year I have had the pleasure of  
10 being able to split my time between Ogden and  
11 Jenner. And I think -- well, I don't think, I  
12 know. I'd like to share something very  
13 important that I think for this school, for the  
14 teachers, staff, parents, students, the  
15 community.

16           Jenner Academy of the Arts is a school  
17 with students that are bright, hard working, and  
18 that actively seek out opportunities to further  
19 their education. Before school, during school,  
20 and after school you can find students in the  
21 hallway studying, not necessarily to keep up but  
22 more often than not to jump ahead.

23           It's a school that is filled with young  
24 people that are bright, active, energetic, and

1 that have welcomed me, a complete stranger, into  
2 this community, and they have worked very hard  
3 with their teachers and staff.

4 In regards to the teachers, after  
5 participating and seeing many of the Ogden  
6 classroom spaces, I can confidently say that I  
7 hope, I hope one day our kids at Ogden have the  
8 honor to be taught by some of the teachers that  
9 Jenner has and --

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. CASTRO: I'm going to give a  
12 shout-out -- because she's awesome and I'm a  
13 parent -- Miss Stamps, a teacher at Jenner, is  
14 incredible.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. CASTRO: This merger will offer  
17 students care and love but also incredibly high  
18 academic standards. It's inspiring. It really  
19 is inspiring. And as someone who is continuing  
20 to get a doctorate right now, it is continuing  
21 to push in an innovative way teaching young  
22 people of color in Chicago, and yes, but that's  
23 just one teacher.

24 The school right now is filled, filled

1 with staff that do everything and anything,  
2 during lunch, before school, and after school.  
3 And finally, things that aren't easy to measure  
4 and aren't easy to capture, but you see it the  
5 hallway interactions. Young people and teachers  
6 are being held accountable to each other. It's  
7 really inspiring.

8 Also as someone who has worked at an  
9 auxiliary role, I also have a few shout-outs for  
10 people like Miss Joyner whose everyday  
11 behind-the-scenes work to build a space for  
12 young people to feel welcome, both in school and  
13 as they need.

14 Wrapping up, I do have a fear. My fear  
15 though is that misrepresentations have misled  
16 people about what this merger could mean for  
17 Ogden families. And as someone who has spent  
18 time there, I'm here to clarify and make it  
19 very, very, very clear.

20 If the merger is approved, Ogden would  
21 gain, not lose. It would be enriched, not  
22 cheapened. And it would mean that Ogden  
23 families would grow in the most incredible way  
24 possible. I am here to support the Ogden-Jenner

1 merger.

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. METCALF: Can we have the next set  
4 of speakers? Thank you.

5 MS. SPARKS: Good evening. My name is  
6 Kelly Sparks, K-e-l-l-y S-p-a-r-k-s. I am a  
7 parent of an Ogden student, and I am for the  
8 merger and I agree with everything everyone  
9 before me has said.

10 My comment is more in the logistical  
11 nature of the overall support. I appreciate the  
12 time and effort that has been put into this plan  
13 and it's extremely thoughtful. I've worked in  
14 education and education research for 20 years  
15 and I appreciate the detail that has been given.

16 I do ask that the planning team examine  
17 or explore more the staggered start times. For  
18 me that would actually cause more logistical  
19 issues if Ogden is staggered at the end of the  
20 day. And also there are many research studies  
21 that show that a later start time is better for  
22 students and for their academic progress.

23 So I would just like that to be further  
24 explored and that would be for students both at

1 Ogden and Jenner in that transition, and that  
2 potentially 8:30, 9:00 or 8:15, 9:45 is better  
3 than an 8:00 a.m. start time.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. KITTLE: My name is Erica Kittle,  
6 K-i-t-t-l-e. I had the pleasure of serving as  
7 Ogden's assistant principal for three years.

8 About a year and a half ago I  
9 transitioned into a new role, but I still very  
10 much consider the Ogden community my family and  
11 care very much about the success of my students  
12 at Ogden.

13 I wanted to speak tonight just to share  
14 a few perspectives as to why this merger is a  
15 benefit to students in both buildings. Ogden  
16 and Jenner students have so much to learn from  
17 one another. In the spring of 2016 the  
18 principal and I chaperoned 14 students from  
19 Ogden and Jenner to a once-in-a-lifetime Cubs  
20 experience. Students spent time in the dugout  
21 and listened to a pep talk from bench coach Dave  
22 Martinez.

23 While the experience itself was quite  
24 incredible, it was watching the Jenner students

1 show the Ogden kids how to navigate public  
2 transportation and the fact that our students  
3 sat, ate, and laughed together as if they had  
4 always known one another. That night I listened  
5 as students discussed new music, artists,  
6 favorite actresses, and shared information about  
7 themselves.

8 That same spring Ogden and Jenner  
9 students proved to me that they can positively  
10 collaborate and communicate without hesitation  
11 or detriment.

12 I just call for middle school student  
13 representatives -- student council  
14 representatives on a team building and  
15 fact-finding mission adventure with Jenner's  
16 student committee. Together students can spend  
17 the morning getting to know one another and the  
18 afternoon working in groups to design an  
19 interactive game that they then talk about.

20 That day I heard students discussing  
21 their hopes, fears regarding the potential  
22 consolidation. Hopes: Make new friends like we  
23 did today, learn something new, more  
24 opportunities to learn from other students.

1           When it came to fears, the students sat  
2     in silence for quite some time, which you know  
3     is very difficult for middle school students.  
4     It was then an Ogden student broke the silence  
5     and said, I'm not fearful of merging schools. I  
6     will accept the Jenner students just as the  
7     Ogden students accepted me when I was new.

8           It was that sample. The research  
9     supports that when students have the opportunity  
10    to interact with groups of people who have  
11    different perspectives from their own, their own  
12    critical thinking and social acceptance improves  
13    dramatically. I support the Ogden and Jenner  
14    consolidation because research and our students  
15    have already proven this is what is best for  
16    every child's success.

17                           (Applause.)

18           MS. CHROBAK-PRINCE: Hi. Good evening,  
19    everyone. My name is Teresa Chrobak-Prince,  
20    C-h-r-o-b-a-k-P-r-i-n-c-e. I am the principal  
21    of Herzl Elementary School on the southwest side  
22    of Chicago.

23           I'm here today to speak to the  
24    Ogden-Jenner community and hopefully help to



1 quell any trepidations that you may have about  
2 how your children will be affected by a  
3 Jenner-Ogden merger. My perspective comes from  
4 being a principal of a CPS school in a community  
5 that has been historically underserved and  
6 neglected for many years.

7 I also bring the perspective of a CPS  
8 parent whose children attend selective  
9 enrollment schools, and as a former CPS student  
10 myself, I attended a highly diverse CPS middle  
11 and high school on the southwest side of  
12 Chicago.

13 All of these experiences have provided  
14 unique insights as to the value that this  
15 opportunity can provide for your community. The  
16 opportunity of the Ogden-Jenner merger is for  
17 each student to enhance the educational  
18 experiences of the children at both schools.

19 First, for the children of Jenner, this  
20 opportunity will provide a more even playing  
21 field for academic achievements as well as  
22 exposure to a much more robust and diverse  
23 learning community. I have personally  
24 experienced the positive impact that this level

1 of exposure can have on teaching and learning.  
2 My own children have learned to be more  
3 accepting, open-minded, and compassionate of  
4 peers who come from diverse backgrounds.

5 I believe that this opportunity will  
6 allow educational experiences that transcend  
7 paper and pencils. Students at Jenner will  
8 thrive socially and emotionally as well as  
9 academically while learning tolerance,  
10 acceptance, and peace.

11 The time is now. The place is here.  
12 The discussion and opportunity happening today  
13 should be the norm, not the exception in a city  
14 as diverse as Chicago. The Ogden-Jenner merger  
15 would be a model of inspiration, integration,  
16 and acceptance for current and future leaders of  
17 Chicago Public Schools as well as the  
18 communities they serve.

19 I am an administrator in a school very  
20 different than Ogden and Jenner, yet I am here  
21 today knowing that the outcome of this merger  
22 will transfer to schools across the district.  
23 It is high time that we come together to show  
24 that all our students deserve to receive equal

1 educational opportunities.

2 I am extremely excited to be here today  
3 as a parent, principal, and former CPS student  
4 to witness equity in action.

5 Can I just say one more thing? I have  
6 known Dr. Beyer for many years. This is the  
7 most important part. During the first years of  
8 our administrative endeavors, I witnessed the  
9 transformation of his prior school. I have  
10 confidence that he will ensure the process will  
11 be smooth, a safe transition, and that all  
12 students will be academically challenged.

13 He, more than anyone I know, will work  
14 tirelessly to ensure that all students will have  
15 a respective, safe, and calm environment. I  
16 understand that the unknown may be scary, the  
17 process bumpy.

18 As a parent, I understand your concerns  
19 about the school going through changes, but as  
20 an educator and a colleague, I am confident the  
21 district and the school administration will  
22 ensure best outcomes for all stakeholders.  
23 Thank you very much.

24 (Applause.)

1 MR. LIMMER: My name is Seth M. Limmer,  
2 L-i-m-m-e-r. I serve as Senior Rabbi of  
3 Chicago Sinai Congregation which has been in the  
4 heart of our city's north side for the past two  
5 decades of our 156-year history in the City of  
6 Chicago.

7 For the past eight years we've built a  
8 strong relationship mentoring and supporting and  
9 sustaining school and families that comprise the  
10 wonderful community around the Jenner Academy of  
11 the Arts by nature of our location at the corner  
12 of Delaware and State. The Ogden International  
13 Academy is not just our neighbor but is the CPS  
14 home of many of our Sinai member families.

15 For our synagogue, these two  
16 schools anchor our neighborhood and our  
17 community. Two years ago the proposal to merge  
18 these two schools came to my attention from many  
19 sources; our Ogden families, our Jenner  
20 volunteers, and our community partners. I came  
21 to see the opportunity and importance of  
22 bringing together student communities that so  
23 many of us see as separate even though for us at  
24 Chicago Sinai Congregation, they're all clearly

1 a part of the selfsame community, the Near North  
2 neighborhood.

3 When CPS two years ago facilitated the  
4 action, I was fortunate enough to receive the  
5 opportunity of a lifetime to be part of the  
6 Ogden-Jenner Steering Committee working with  
7 incredible people and with incredible people at  
8 CPS as well. Working with a dedicated cadre of  
9 volunteers, parents, community members, clergy,  
10 we came to see the potential for school  
11 action here was about much more than an obvious  
12 win and an obvious upgrade for both  
13 school communities.

14 In addition to being a win-win, the  
15 potential action here is a major step of redress  
16 for the problems that plague the heart of our  
17 city: a false sense of segregation and  
18 pervasive racial injustice. We know we are  
19 challenged to see our city as one Chicago and we  
20 know that this merger will allow us to see our  
21 community as it should be, transitioning and  
22 moving to overturn long-imposed boundaries that  
23 were put in place to separate us from each  
24 other, most notably Division Street.

1           Until we intentionally erase these  
2 boundaries, we cannot move towards the one  
3 Chicago we all need to live in. CPS today is  
4 firmly fighting the governor's veto about an  
5 unjust state formula that perpetuates racial  
6 discrimination, and we have an opportunity here  
7 to make sure that equitable education of the  
8 highest level is possible for all the students  
9 at CPS, and I could not more strongly, as my  
10 time is up, endorse this.

11                               (Applause.)

12           MS. SMEDLEY: Hello. I'm Lori Smedley,  
13 S-m-e-d-l-e-y. I have three daughters. Two of  
14 them are currently at Ogden East, one in 5th  
15 grade, one in 2nd grade, and the youngest one  
16 who will start kindergarten, hopefully at a  
17 newly merged school, in the fall.

18           I'll be brief. I just wanted to say  
19 that I -- can you hear? What happened? Did I  
20 mess it up?

21           I just wanted to say that I feel as  
22 though we are incredibly lucky to be in the  
23 position we're in. We're lucky that Ogden was  
24 overcrowded and remains oversubscribed. We are

1 lucky that a school seven blocks away with  
2 plenty of capacity is willing to talk to us.

3 We are lucky that Principal Beyer and  
4 Principal Croston were willing to work together  
5 and open a conversation about how we can make a  
6 more equitable education scenario for the Near  
7 North side. We're lucky that the conversation  
8 turned from the crowding and under-enrollment  
9 situations to a conversation about educational  
10 equity, but that it still seeks to suit the  
11 needs for facility enhancements for both schools  
12 and the financial savings for both schools.

13 I really hope that this can be a model  
14 of CPS across the district once we successfully  
15 implement a merger for Ogden and Jenner.

16 Thank you so much.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. ALVAREZ: Hello. My name is Juan  
19 Alvarez, A-l-v-a-r-e-z.

20 I live currently in the Jenner  
21 boundary. I'm the father of two young  
22 daughters, and I am in favor and support of the  
23 merger. I live in the neighborhood and I have  
24 seen the Jenner students grow over these past

1 years from young children as they grow older,  
2 graduate and so forth. And having witnessed  
3 this growth, I think it's important to be able  
4 to look at our community and be able to grow the  
5 community.

6 I feel that this merger is a strong and  
7 important component of that growth. It's  
8 important to make the choice of living in the  
9 city and having viable neighborhoods that we  
10 live in, and that's reflected in my choice, my  
11 family's choice to stay in our neighborhood.  
12 There is very little that's more important than  
13 the value of our neighborhoods, and schools are  
14 a critical function of that.

15 As a community member, I have been part  
16 of this process and I have had the honor of  
17 witnessing this process since its inception in  
18 2016. I am proud of the leadership that CPS has  
19 shown and I am proud of the community  
20 involvement and the response in making this  
21 merger a priority.

22 On a personal note, I would like to  
23 thank Principal Croston for involving our family  
24 into our community, our school community, and



1 also for involving us into the N.E.S.T. and I am  
2 very glad to see that the N.E.S.T. culture and  
3 philosophy will remain as part of the  
4 Ogden-Jenner merger. Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. METCALF: Will the next five  
7 speakers begin to approach the podium, please?  
8 Thank you.

9 MS. YUTZY: My name is Heather Yutzy,  
10 Y-u-t-z-y, and I'm principal of Belding School  
11 on the northwest side of Chicago near Montrose  
12 and Pulaski and also the parent of a CPS 3rd  
13 grader who attends my neighborhood school, so I  
14 have a horse in the game.

15 I'm here to speak in favor of the  
16 Ogden-Jenner merger. I followed the story and I  
17 believe that this merger positions your two  
18 schools to be national leaders in school  
19 improvement and reform. This merger can go  
20 forward and you can have confidence that the  
21 families and children at both schools will  
22 benefit. Research has proven time and again  
23 that students do not experience any harms from  
24 integration efforts. All students benefit.

1 Teachers College at Columbia University  
2 in New York released a significant report about  
3 this topic and researchers determined that  
4 students' exposure to students who are different  
5 from themselves and the novel ideas and  
6 challenges that such exposure brings leads to  
7 improved cognitive skills including critical  
8 thinking and problem solving.

9 These are reasons why I'm proud that my  
10 daughter attends an extremely diverse school in  
11 CPS. I am confident that this merger will  
12 benefit both the Ogden and Jenner students.

13 You have a unique opportunity to lead  
14 the way in showing the city and the nation how a  
15 school merger can be done with harmony, dignity,  
16 and love. I think that five years from now you  
17 will look back at this process with pride and  
18 that many others will learn from you about how  
19 this thing can be done.

20 You will create global citizens who  
21 know how to leave the N.E.S.T., how to be  
22 neighborhood, stay engaged, be scholarly, and  
23 use teamwork. The rest of us will learn from  
24 you.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. WELLS: My name is Rebecca Wells,  
3 W-e-l-l-s. Thank you for the opportunity to  
4 speak today.

5 My name is Rebecca Wells and I'm a  
6 parent of a 5th grader at Ogden and a member of  
7 the Jenner-Ogden Community Steering Committee.  
8 What I think is important for everyone in this  
9 room to know is that countless hours have  
10 already been invested into this proposal to  
11 merge. This is not just being thrown together  
12 as I heard some people say and I read on various  
13 Facebook posts.

14 Over the past two years parents,  
15 community members, and teachers from both  
16 schools have been working together to find the  
17 best solution to our unique opportunity.  
18 Tonight I actually wanted to do a little bit of  
19 quick math on how many hours, how many woman and  
20 man-hours we put into this, and I am venturing  
21 to guess it's over 2,000 hours that's already  
22 been spent, and that's on the low end it's got  
23 to be.

24 So we've been asking ourselves a hard

1 question throughout this process. We've been  
2 pushing CPS to think outside the box making sure  
3 that this is equitable for all the students,  
4 honoring both school cultures and history and  
5 striving to make this merger a reality. I truly  
6 believe this has the potential to be far more  
7 than just another school action.

8 We're committed to doing this in a  
9 thoughtful way. I've said that a million times,  
10 so you can quote me on it. We have engaged  
11 thought leaders, community leaders, and  
12 organizations that want to be part of this  
13 incredibly important work. We've raised grant  
14 money, thousands of dollars of grant money that  
15 people want to give because they believe in  
16 this.

17 We started a diversity training program  
18 called SEED to support our parents and our  
19 caregivers. We've created JOLT activities for  
20 our students so that they can spend time  
21 together in the same space, and we've developed  
22 professional development opportunities for our  
23 teachers and staff so that they feel supported  
24 and confident moving forward.

1           There is no denying that all eyes are  
2   on us. We have an opportunity to make this a  
3   blueprint for other schools within our city, our  
4   state, and our nation, and I'm really excited to  
5   make this a reality. Thank you.

6                           (Applause.)

7           MS. TAYLOR: We're going to go out of  
8   order a little bit. So I want to invite Nos. 34  
9   to 44 to come up. So if you have a number  
10  that's in between 34 and 44, please come up.  
11  Thank you.

12           MR. ARNOLD: Michael Arnold. My last  
13  name is spelled A-r-n-o-l-d. I want to thank  
14  everyone for the work they've done.

15           I guess I come from a different  
16  standpoint. I've heard some interesting things  
17  tossed around, some interesting premises, and I  
18  think at this point as we've absorbed  
19  information, I have some questions. And the  
20  first one would be, the plan that you have  
21  that's a draft plan, this is the first plan of  
22  any kind that's been presented in this whole  
23  discussion over years. When is it going to be a  
24  final plan that people can really process and

1 then weigh in on? Do we know?

2 Another question I have is can you show  
3 us the combined schools' data? So for each  
4 school in CPS there is growth, diversity  
5 statistics. Are we going to be able to see what  
6 a combined school looks like?

7 Every person just about who has spoken  
8 before me has hinted that diversity is good. We  
9 love diversity at Ogden. That's part of why I  
10 chose to live in the Ogden neighborhood and  
11 participate in a neighborhood school. But it's  
12 the 10th most diverse school of 600 already. So  
13 is it going to be more diverse or is it going to  
14 be less diverse at the end?

15 Maybe I'm the only one, but I hear 1.8  
16 million over three and a half years as a  
17 temporary thing. And in my four years -- my  
18 oldest is in 3rd grade -- we've seen four  
19 different principals at Ogden and three  
20 different CEOs in the school system.

21 I've met them all, and some of them  
22 haven't left Ogden for the best reasons and some  
23 of them haven't left the CEO's office for the  
24 best reasons.

1           Who is going to be guaranteeing that  
2           this money actually gets here? Where does it  
3           go? Does it just go to fund the transition  
4           teachers or does it just help them fundraise?

5           I'd also like to know because Ogden has  
6           a unique situation where our 6th to 8th graders  
7           get funded at a high school level which is  
8           higher. So as an Ogden parent, what are my net  
9           benefits for my children? No one has really  
10          explained that in any of these things.

11          You said overall diversity is good and  
12          overall this will work. I think diversity is  
13          good and overall this probably will work. I  
14          have questions that maybe aren't pleasant to  
15          ask. When you look at the statistics of Jenner  
16          and you look at the demographics of it, it's  
17          almost identical to here, but the building is  
18          decades older.

19          Who is standing up for the kids at  
20          Manierre? Who is saying to them, You perform  
21          better than the kids at Jenner? Do they have  
22          better teachers? Maybe they should be part of  
23          this conversation as well. I would like to  
24          understand the same questions about those.

1 I'd like to hear who stands up for  
2 these other kids that are getting \$1.8 million  
3 in CPS money sucked out of them plus the  
4 \$300,000 of Title I money per year that goes to  
5 Jenner getting sucked out as well, and I think  
6 somebody should kind of hint that maybe at the  
7 next meeting we could talk about those things.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. OLESKER-TOMAS: My name is Betsy  
10 Olesker-Tomas, O-l-e-s-k-e-r-T-o-m-a-s. I'm the  
11 parent of a 5th Grade Ogden student. He has  
12 been a student here for seven years. Our family  
13 and friends are in favor of the Jenner-Ogden  
14 merger because it's the right thing to do for  
15 all CPS students.

16 It will be a small step for educational  
17 equality and I'm sure will be a national model  
18 for merging socioeconomic and racially diverse  
19 students. We have enjoyed getting to know the  
20 students, parents, and teachers of Jenner by  
21 singing, creating, and observing art together  
22 during this process.

23 All thanks to Principals Croston and  
24 Beyer whose friendship and open-mindedness made



1 this opportunity possible. My son and I have  
2 have personally logged many hours working toward  
3 this merger and getting to know our future  
4 classmates and new parent friends.

5 The merger and the transition plan have  
6 been meticulously thought through by CPS by  
7 demonstrating their International Baccalaureate  
8 traits of open-mindedness, empathy, and respect.  
9 They continue to refine the plan on a daily  
10 basis.

11 Representing my son, I deliver this  
12 message on his behalf: Ogden is my home. I  
13 think the merger should go on. Jenner may close  
14 if the merger doesn't happen, and all students  
15 should have access to education. Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. McCRAY: Good evening, everyone.  
18 The gentleman that just walked away, he has a  
19 lot of questions, and he's absolutely right.

20 Oh, I'm sorry. My name is Kizzy,  
21 K-i-z-z-y, McCray, M-c-C-r-a-y. There is a lot  
22 of questions to be asked regarding the budget,  
23 but this evening I just want to say that the  
24 plan seems to be near perfect, like the draft

1 it's supposed to be.

2 But what I want to speak on and  
3 advocate for is teachers. My daughter goes to  
4 Jenner. I've been around Jenner for over 20  
5 years. I lived in the community for over 20  
6 years. So Jenner is just a well-known school  
7 for me and my family.

8 I'm advocating for the teachers, to  
9 make sure that the teachers, the current  
10 teachers that are there continue to stay there.  
11 My daughter loves and is fond of all the  
12 teachers at Jenner.

13 If this merger does happen, the Ogden  
14 children will come over. They're going to get a  
15 chance to have this love, abundant love that  
16 Jenner has given my daughter as well, and also  
17 advocating for the name, the Jenner's name.

18 Jenner is a trademark, so to speak.  
19 This is what we have been doing for 50 years,  
20 that if the merger occurred, we do keep the name  
21 as well. But the gentleman does have many  
22 questions regarding the budget and that's  
23 something that we're going to need to know and  
24 learn and just make sure that everything gets

1 spent the way it should be spent, that  
2 everything is not just peaches and cream but is  
3 actually going to happen.

4 So I do want my daughter to get the  
5 opportunity to have the diversity going on until  
6 she gets out of elementary school because we are  
7 living in a mixed community and she needs to  
8 know her neighbors. But for the most part, the  
9 plan does look fine and I just hope that  
10 everything stays this way. As a parent that's  
11 on the LSD board, I want to campaign to make  
12 sure that that goes and is presented well.

13 I'm also a parent at the SEED, one of  
14 the Jenner parents at the SEED, and I got a  
15 chance to meet some of the Ogden parents. I  
16 love you guys. You guys are so much fun to be  
17 around, so thank you for this opportunity to be  
18 a part of the SEED.

19 But my only concern is -- some of my  
20 only concern right now is the teachers, just to  
21 make sure that the teachers at Jenner will be a  
22 part of this merge and just accept the Ogden  
23 students and just get some of their love. Thank  
24 you.

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. BALSAM: Good evening. My name is  
3 Aaron Balsam, B-a-l-s-a-m, and my wife Amy and I  
4 and our children live in the Jenner neighborhood  
5 and we support this merger.

6 I was actually thinking I feel a little  
7 like renewing my vows tonight, but basically I'm  
8 sharing -- basically there's three high level  
9 thoughts going forward with respect to the  
10 merger.

11 First, I believe this proposal is  
12 different than many you often see. Many simply  
13 force students out or at best some move existing  
14 students from one school to another school. In  
15 other words, there is no net community  
16 participation from the change.

17 This merger is different in that I  
18 believe it will gradually increase participation  
19 and pull new children into the school. It will  
20 therefore increase on that city and state,  
21 parents and families which means a growing pot  
22 of tax dollars and support.

23 Second, as families do stay in the city  
24 longer, this will increase and sometimes defer

1 their investment in the community. The mindset  
2 of investors currently is the poorest mindset  
3 which stands ready to leave as soon as soon as  
4 there's no market benefit. This merger will  
5 mean more families stay for the long run in the  
6 Near North neighborhood.

7 Third, I believe if we are really  
8 honest, we know that something is not right  
9 about the way the boundaries are drawn right  
10 now. Our educational institutions have created  
11 a giant two-way system where one specializes in  
12 post-graduate work and another set of tracks  
13 leads somewhere else.

14 This merger eliminates previously  
15 gerrymandered neighborhood boundaries and brings  
16 with it all the short and long-term benefits of  
17 further integration.

18 Thank you to CPS for these numerous  
19 opportunities over a couple years now to provide  
20 feedback. For those who are still unconvinced  
21 or have specific questions, please do continue  
22 to share constructive feedback and engage as  
23 we'll continue to move forward together. Thank  
24 you.

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. LAMME: My name is Bill Lamme,  
3 L-a-m-m-e. I'm a retired social studies teacher  
4 from Kelly High School. My kids went to Andrew  
5 Jackson, Hirsch, Pritzker, and Whitney Young.

6 I still remain active in the Chicago  
7 Teachers Union. I've been watching the articles  
8 and I'm so excited for you and the people of  
9 goodwill that have put so much effort into this.  
10 I wish you well in your endeavors.

11 I have a lot of confidence in the youth  
12 and their ability to benefit from this. I'm a  
13 little more nervous about the adults, I must  
14 admit. Chicago Public Schools has a mixed  
15 record in this area. I'm not very confident  
16 about their top leadership and their misplaced  
17 priorities and ideology of how education should  
18 take place. I think you will have to be alert  
19 to make this work.

20 I'm certainly not intending to condemn  
21 everyone from CPS with all these remarks I just  
22 made. I think one thing you need to be careful  
23 about is that CPS not view this as an  
24 opportunity to misplace teachers from these

1 schools. These faculty should not be pushed  
2 away from this in this merger in the name of  
3 efficiency or whatever.

4 I think parents need to not drink the  
5 Kool-Aid of the high-stakes test and embrace the  
6 cool waters of compassion and social justice and  
7 humanity. Good luck to you all and continue  
8 your fight.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. CROSTON: Good afternoon. My name  
11 is Sheena Davis Croston, C-r-o-s-t-o-n,  
12 Principal Croston's wife.

13 I just wanted to say that Rob is very  
14 passionate about all children having access to  
15 an equitable education. He's very passionate  
16 about the work being done in the Near North  
17 community to merge the Jenner and Ogden  
18 communities, and it brings his heart so much joy  
19 to know that the work has continued.

20 Rob began great work at Jenner  
21 transforming the new climate and culture there,  
22 teaching the students to leave the N.E.S.T., to  
23 be neighborly, to stay engaged, to be scholarly,  
24 and to use teamwork.

1           So I just wanted to commend this  
2 community for -- and just say thank you on Rob's  
3 behalf because this was so near and dear to his  
4 heart, that you have continued to be neighborly  
5 towards one another. You have stayed engaged  
6 with this process. You looked at the data. You  
7 have been scholarly, and you used teamwork to  
8 work towards bringing this merger to life.

9           So I just hope all of the best and that  
10 all communities will come together and have a  
11 new home.

12                           (Applause.)

13           MS. TAYLOR: So the next numbers are 44  
14 and above. I believe our last number probably  
15 went to 50 something or 52. So is there anyone  
16 that has a number after 44? Anyone else?

17           Thank you for your comments.

18                           (Applause.)

19           MR. METCALF: So again we're going to  
20 take a five-minute recess, and for those folks  
21 who did not get an opportunity to speak and  
22 would now like to, again, you can go to the  
23 resource table that is in the outside area and  
24 sign up and then we will reconvene in five



1 minutes.

2 (Recess had from 7:09 to  
3 7:22 p.m.)

4 MR. METCALF: All right. We are  
5 getting ready to reconvene. We did have two  
6 more sign up to speak, so please take your seats  
7 so that we can give the additional parent and  
8 community members that signed up the opportunity  
9 to have their voices heard. We'd greatly  
10 appreciate it.

11 So if you can take your seat, after the  
12 additional parent and community members have  
13 spoken, we are here until 8:00 o'clock. Feel  
14 free once the -- I think we have two people that  
15 signed up. Once they've spoken, you can talk to  
16 us or you can be dismissed. If you have  
17 questions, do not forget that we have a resource  
18 table that's out in the back with  
19 representatives.

20 At the last 30 minutes, so from 8:00 to  
21 8:30, there will be people there that will be  
22 able to answer some of your questions. So we  
23 are getting ready to begin. So can we have the  
24 two speakers that signed up that want to be

1 heard come to the podium? Thank you.

2 Please state your name and your  
3 affiliation with both schools.

4 MR. MARIC: Hello. My name is Paul  
5 Maric, M-a-r-i-c. My daughter is in Grade 5  
6 here at Ogden. I would say in general I am a  
7 proponent of the merger. I think it's a great  
8 idea for many of the reasons spoken, but I also  
9 want to be sure that the plan proposed is  
10 something that protects both my daughter as well  
11 as all the students of both schools.

12 I think for me, you know, I'm not  
13 politically correct. I'm not somebody who can  
14 say that I understand all the proceedings and  
15 components of both systems and the unions and so  
16 on. I think everybody should have sort of a  
17 fair assessment over what's happening, what's  
18 been happening.

19 I think just in general I want to make  
20 sure that my daughter's education stays high,  
21 that the standards for teaching, for  
22 administration, for everything involved in her  
23 schooling stays as high as it has been. And I  
24 think if there are certain deficiencies that

1 have come about as a result of this merger, that  
2 we address them, and if that means further  
3 enhancement of teachers' capabilities through  
4 programs that help with that, then I'm all for  
5 it.

6 I know that in my professional life, I  
7 need to perform. I need to be aware of my  
8 capabilities, my skills, and if I don't perform,  
9 then I'm -- I think that should be on the table  
10 for any professional, and that's just my  
11 personal assessment. I want to make sure that  
12 all the kids are taken care of and that there is  
13 no drop in quality in their education. Thank  
14 you.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. MacDONALD: Hello. My name is  
17 Janet MacDonald, M-a-c-D-o-n-a-l-d. I'm  
18 speaking as a proponent of Jenner. I am a  
19 Jenner community member. I am also -- kind of a  
20 little bit of my background is I am a former CPS  
21 teacher.

22 I have taught on the south side of  
23 Chicago in one of the low-income neighborhoods  
24 as they introduced the IB curriculum to a

1 community very similar to the Jenner community.  
2 And so speaking from a teacher's perspective  
3 introducing the IB curriculum to a new student  
4 set, I know it's incredibly awesome.

5 It gives the students a wonderful  
6 chance to learn a different sort of environment,  
7 and I know there's a lot of probably worry on  
8 the Ogden parents' part of, Is my student going  
9 to be held to the same level of rigor with this  
10 new student integration? And I can  
11 wholeheartedly say as best as I can that I think  
12 they absolutely will be kept at the same rigor  
13 and they will be pushed.

14 As an Ogden student, you will be pushed  
15 with these new students because it's all about  
16 international mindedness and all about being  
17 open-minded and thinking, and having a new  
18 perspective really drives students to think on a  
19 very different level. And just from the  
20 teacher's perspective, I want to say that the  
21 Jenner kids will greatly benefit as well as the  
22 Ogden kids will greatly benefit.

23 I know someone had brought up the  
24 demographic question, and I think it has been

1 addressed at some of these meetings. It won't  
2 change the Ogden demographic. It isn't going to  
3 change it at all. But I am for the merger,  
4 absolutely. Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. METCALF: So once again, before we  
7 end this session, is there anybody that has  
8 anything to say? If you do, make sure that you  
9 register at the back able. Okay. That  
10 concludes the public comment portion. We will  
11 be here until 8:00 o'clock.

12 Feel free to stay, but feel free -- if  
13 you must go, we understand, but we'll be here to  
14 talk.

15 So one of the things I want to make  
16 sure that I talk about is this notion of the IB  
17 curriculum. One of the things that we want to  
18 make sure, that we will make sure is that the  
19 same caliber of rigor and expectations that is  
20 kind of naturally and inherently built within  
21 the IB curriculum will remain in both this  
22 location and in the 5-8. So it will still be as  
23 challenging as to the IB units.

24 Teachers will be trained in how to

1 deliver and teach to the IB standards. So as it  
2 relates to the curriculum, nothing will change.  
3 IB is worldwide and so those tenets that are  
4 within IB will remain the same.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. NEVINS: Thank you so much for  
7 coming. Please remember you can look at the  
8 draft of the district plan that's on the  
9 website. I just want to make sure if you're  
10 curious about the final transition plan, after  
11 we hear input from the community meetings as  
12 well as the public hearing at the Board, if this  
13 proposal is voted on, the draft transition plan  
14 would then become a final document anticipated  
15 probably in the spring. Right now we're just  
16 gathering input from the two community hearings  
17 and the public hearing at the end of January.

18 Thank you so much for coming. Thanks,  
19 everyone.

20  
21 (Proceedings concluded at 7:31 p.m.)  
22  
23  
24

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I, Marianne Nee, a Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State of Illinois, do hereby certify that I reported in shorthand the proceedings had and the testimony taken, if any, in the foregoing matter, and that the foregoing is a true, complete, and correct transcript of my shorthand notes so taken to the best of my abilities as aforesaid.

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